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ABSTRACT

As part of an application for a federal grant, College of the Canyons, in California, conducted a study to determine the number of fall 1992 students from families with low income levels and their racial/ethnic groups. Low income was defined as an amount equal to 150% of the poverty income level established by the United States Bureau of the Census. Low annual income for a family of 2 would be an amount equal to or below $13,785, or $20,925 for a family of 4. The college gathered data on students' family income, family size, and race/ethnicity from application materials completed in fall 1992. Frequency distributions were run for each of the variables and a new variable, income status, was derived by combining family size and income and comparing them to Census figures. The frequency distribution indicated that 1,081 student were classified as low income, 4,551 were not low income, and another 1,038 were unable to be classified because they had not responded to one or both of the classifying variables. The racial/ethnic group with the highest percentage of students from low income families was Latino/Hispanic at 27%, followed by Black, non-Hispanic at 25%. The group with the lowest percentage of students from low income families was White, non-Hispanic at 13.8%. Overall, about 16% of the fall 1992 student came from low income families. A table of base annual low income levels for the contiguous 48 states, the District of Columbia, and outlying jurisdictions; Alaska; and Hawaii is attached. (KP)

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LOW-INCOME STUDENTS

COLLEGE OF THE CANYONS

JC 950 443

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College of the Canyons
Santa Clarita Community College District

LOW-INCOME STUDENTS

Nancy J. Mattice

Office of Institutional Development

April 1995

LOW-INCOME STUDENTS

In preparing the college's application for a federal grant, we were asked to determine how many of our Fall 1992 students were from families with low-income levels and the breakdown by racial/ethnic groups. Low-income was defined by the agency as "the amounts equal to 150 percent of the family income levels established by the U.S. Bureau of the Census for determining poverty status." As an example, low-income for a family of two would be an amount equal to or below $13,785. For a family of four the amount would be $20,925. The low-income threshold chart is attached.

First we asked the Computer Center to create a datafile with information about "Family Income", "Family Size" and Race/Ethnicity from the application material filled out by each student each semester. Since our federal application form called for fall 1992 data, all further calculations use the data from that semester. We ran frequency distributions for each of the variables and found the following:

FAMILY SIZE
(Number in household, including self)
Fall 1992

Number in Household	Number	Percentage
1	682	10.3
2	993	14.9
3	1154	17.3
4	1568	23.5
5	800	12.0
6	312	4.7
7	78	1.2
8	39	0.6
9	18	0.3
Unreported	1026	15.4
TOTAL	**6670**	**100.0%**

FAMILY INCOME
Fall 1992

Income Range	Number	Percentage
$0 -- $7,499	620	9.3
$7,500 -- $13,999	402	6.0
$14,000 -- $19,999	359	5.4
$20,000 -- $24,999	551	8.3
$25,000 -- $35,000	750	11.2
Over $35,000	3067	46.0
Unreported	921	13.8
TOTAL	**6670**	**100.0%**

RACE/ETHNICITY
Fall 1992

Racial/Ethnic Group	Number	Percentage
American Indian/Alaskan Native	45	0.7
Asian American	317	4.8
Filipino	133	2.0
Pacific Islands	11	0.2
Black, Non-Hispanic	164	2.5
Latino/Hispanic	955	14.3
Other Non-White	75	1.1
White, Non-Hispanic	4970	74.5
TOTAL	**6670**	**100.0%**

After reviewing the frequencies, we set about creating a new variable called Income Status by combining family size and family income and comparing the size and income levels to the low-income thresholds provided by the federal agency. For example, a student with a family size of 1 and a family income up to $7,499 was categorized as low-income. A student with a family size of 4 and family income up to $19,999 was also considered low-income. Since the income levels used on the college application form did not correspond to the low-income thresholds, we used a conservative approach to classifying students by income status. This may have caused an undercount of the actual number of low-income students enrolled in Fall 1992.

We ran a frequency distribution for Income Status and found 1,081 students were classified as low-income, 4,551 were not low-income and another 1,038 were unable to be classified because they had not responded to one or both of the classifying variables.

INCOME STATUS
Fall 1992

Income Status	Number	Percentage
Low-income	1081	16.2
Not low-income	4551	68.2
Unclasssified	1038	15.6
TOTAL	**6670**	**100.0%**

Finally, we ran a crosstabulation of Income Status by Race/Ethnicity. The table follows.

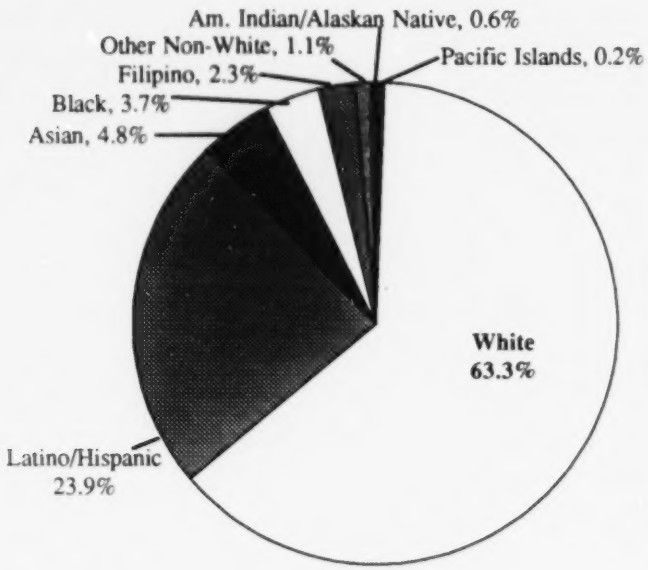
RACE/ETHNICITY BY INCOME STATUS
Fall 1992

Racial/Ethnic Group	Low-Income		Not Low-Income		Unclassified	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	7	15.6	27	60.0	11	24.4
Asian American	52	16.4	222	70.0	43	13.6
Filipino	25	18.8	91	68.4	17	12.8
Pacific Islands	2	18.2	8	72.7	1	9.1
Black, Non-Hispanic	41	25.0	91	55.5	32	19.5
Latino/Hispanic	258	27.0	543	56.9	154	16.1
Other Non-White	12	16.0	47	62.7	16	21.3
White, Non-Hispanic	684	13.8	3522	70.9	764	15.4
TOTAL	**1081**	**16.2%**	**4551**	**68.2%**	**1038**	**15.6%**

The racial/ethnic group with the highest percentage of students from low-income families was Latino/Hispanic (27.0%), followed by Black, Non-Hispanic with 25.0%. One of every four Black and Latino students enrolled in Fall 1992 was from a low-income family. The racial/ethnic group with the lowest percentage of students from low-income families was White, Non-Hispanic (13.8%).

The table above shows that the greatest number of low-income students were White, Non-Hispanic (684). This was followed by Latino/Hispanic with 258 low-income students. Students from these two racial/ethnic groups accounted for 87.2% of all the students identified as low-income. The following pie-chart illustrates this breakdown.

Low-Income Students by Racial/Ethnic Group
Fall 1992



Overall, about 16 percent of the Fall 1992 students came from low-income families. Given both the large number of students who did not supply family income or family size information and the conservative manner in which the classifications were carried out, the proportion of the student body from low-income families is probably higher than 16 percent and the number was probably larger than 1,081.

IMPLICATIONS

The number of low-income students served by the college has implications in terms of the types and the depth of services the college provides. Some campus services, in particular, provide important assistance for low-income students. Included are: Financial Aid, the Child Development Center, EOP&S, CARE, New Horizons and the Career Planning and Placement Center. Each plays an important role in helping a student successfully meet the financial, academic and emotional hurdles faced by an economically disadvantaged student.

The college may want to carry out similar analysis every year or two to monitor the proportion of the student body from low-income families. The data can be used as baseline information for each of the programs mentioned above to determine whether they and the college are providing adequate services for this population.

INCOME WPS

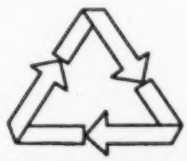
BASE YEAR LOW-INCOME LEVELS

Size of Family Unit	Contiguous 48 States, the District of Columbia, and Outlying Jurisdictions	Alaska	Hawaii
1	$ 10,215	$12,750	$11,745
2	13,785	17,220	15,855
3	17,355	21,690	19,965
4	20,925	26,160	24,075
5	24,495	30,630	28,185
6	28,065	35,100	32,295
7	31,635	39,570	36,405
8	35,250	44,040	40,515

For family units with more than eight members add the following amount for each additional family member: $3,570 for the contiguous 48 states, the District of Columbia and outlying jurisdictions; $4,470 for Alaska; and $4,110 for Hawaii.

The figures shown as low-income levels represent amounts equal to 150 percent of the family income levels established by the U.S. Bureau of the Census for determining poverty status. The Census levels were published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in the FEDERAL REGISTER on February 14, 1992 (57 FR 5455-5457).

Source: U.S. Dept. of Education, Request for Designation as an Eligible Institution under Title III, 1995.



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